GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:94
ANSWERED ON:08.02.2017
Strengthening Alliances with BIMSTEC and BBIN
Panda Shri Baijayant "Jay"

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any progress has been made in strengthening alliances with the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN);

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether India is planning to use the BIMSTEC and BBIN partnerships to exert pressure on Pakistan to honour the terms of ceasefire; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 94 REGARDING "STRENGTHENING ALLIANCES WITH BIMSTEC AND BBIN" FOR ANSWER ON 08.02.2017

Towards strengthening regional cooperation under the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand, India took the initiative to organise the BIMSTEC Leaders Retreat in October 16, 2016 in Goa. At the Retreat, it was agreed to intensify cooperation under BIMSTEC and an Action Plan was accordingly drawn up for implementation of initiatives that promote trade, transit and movement of vehicular traffic, enhancing connectivity, disaster management, information and intelligence sharing, coastal shipping, energy trade, technology transfer, combating terrorism, agriculture, economic, technical and infrastructure cooperation, and developing an Agenda for 2030. Follow-up work is being undertaken by Member Countries of BIMSTEC to fructify progress in these areas.

2. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) have also signed a sub-regional Motor Vehicle Agreement in June 2015 for regulation of passenger, personal and cargo vehicular traffic between the four BBIN countries. India, Nepal and Bangladesh have ratified the Agreement while the same is under consideration in Bhutan. In the meanwhile, successful demonstration runs of passenger and cargo services have been organised. Cooperation under BBIN is also being discussed in the areas of power and water resources management.

3. The Government expects that regional cooperation would advance under both BIMSTEC and BBIN. We hope that these examples would also impact positively, on SAARC and encourage an atmosphere free of terror and violence that is conducive for regional cooperation.